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The Formation, Development and Curation of the Tapling Collection at the British Museum Library in the Nineteenth Century

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The British Library's Philatelic Collections were established with the bequest of the Tapling Collection of stamps and postal stationery to the British Museum Library in 1891. Global in scope and almost complete for the period between 1840 and 1890, the collection is a significant interdisciplinary research resource containing philatelic rarities, essays, proofs, shades, errors as well as varieties. It is also possibly the only major philatelic collection formed during the nineteenth century remaining intact. To mark the 130th anniversary of this donation and the department's creation, this paper will discuss the collection's formation, development and curation during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The life and collecting habits of Thomas Keay Tapling

Thomas Keay Tapling, who was born on 30 October 1855 at Kingswood House in Dulwich, London, formed the collection. The oldest of Thomas and Elizabeth Anne Tapling's four children, he grew up within a wealthy household. Initially taught at home, he went to Harrow in 1870 to complete his education and graduated from Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1880. Called to the Bar at Middle Temple, he specialized in medical jurisprudence but abandoned his legal career on the death of his father in 1882 to take over the family business 'Thomas Tapling & Company'. Initially a large carpet-manufacturing firm operating from Gresham Street in the City of London, the firm successfully expanded and diversified under Tapling's management, transforming into a lucrative home furnishings supplier.[1]

The author would like convey his sincerest gratitude to David Beech MBE, Sir Michael Richard Sefi LVO, Mr Paul Skinner FRPSL and Ms Nichola Davies for their comments, support and encouragement during the production of this paper. Any errors or flaws remain the author's own. Likewise he would like to thank the Editor of the *Electronic British Library Journal* for agreeing to publish it.

[1] Fred. K. Melville, *The Tapling Collection of Stamps and Postal Stationery at the British Museum* (London, 1905), p. 1. Ron Negus, 'Tapling – The Man Behind the Collection', *The London Philatelist*, cxvi (March 2007), pp. 39-40.

Fig. 1. Photograph of Thomas Keay Tapling (1855-1891). Source: *The Philatelic Record*, ix (1887-1888).

Fig. 2. Thomas Tapling & Company, Gresham Street London. Source: *Illustrated London News* (5 March 1867).

Tapling embarked upon a political career several years later, elected as Conservative MP for Harborough during the 1886 General Election. In Parliament, he participated in numerous debates and sat on the Standing Committee for Trade. Outside of work, he was an active sportsman regularly participating in shooting, angling and fox-hunting.[2] He played for the Marylebone Cricket Club against Cambridge University in 1886 and was part of the first amateur cricket tour of India and Ceylon in 1889-1890, pulling out during the outward-bound journey to care for a seriously ill team mate.[3] Upon his team mate's recovery, Tapling continued to the subcontinent and was a regular international traveller throughout his lifetime, visiting the United States of America and Canada as well as many European countries.[4]

Tapling began stamp collecting when he was ten years old[5] and received £100 for a Christmas present as a teenager which he spent purchasing items for his collection.[6] At Harrow and Cambridge, he remained updated about the latest world-wide stamp issues by reading various philatelic magazines. He was also very active in organized philately. Joining the Philatelic Society, London, during the early 1870s, he quickly moved up the organization and was appointed to its committee in June 1876 and Vice-President in 1881.[7]

Stamp collecting and philately formed a central component of all areas of Tapling's life, a point made self-evident when looking at the formation of his collection. His earliest childhood acquisitions were obtained from incoming correspondence arriving at his father's business. When his interest in philately became serious, family wealth enabled Tapling to collect comprehensively and he was quickly identified as a serious collector by stamp dealers. His own financial success during the 1880s facilitated the acquisition of the finest and most significant collections available on the English philatelic market in their entirety.

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[2] Ibid., p. 41.

[3] Irving Rosenwater, *Thomas Keay Tapling Cricketer and Philatelist* (London: privately printed, 1995), pp. 4-5.

[4] Negus, p. 41.

[5] W. J. Hardy and E. D. Bacon, *The Stamp Collector* (London, 1898), p. 25.

[6] James A. Mackay, 'The Tapling Collection', *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*, xxxix (June 1966), p. 165.

[7] Percy De Worms, *The Royal Philatelic Society, London* (Bath, 1919), pp. 101-2.

Fig. 3. Major Edward Benjamin Evans (1846-1922). Source: *The Philatelic Record*, vi (1884-1885).

Fig. 4. Mauritius 1847 'Post Office' 1d. Orange-red used on cover. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, Tapling Collection: Mauritius.

In 1882, he obtained William Edmond Images's collection for £3000, noted for its numerous rarities, USA material and German postal stationery. Soon afterwards, he acquired William Amos Scarborough Westoby's European stamp collection, as well as Major Edward Benjamin Evans's collection of Mauritius, which included an 1847 one-penny 'Post Office' used on cover. The provenance for much of the Afghanistan, Portuguese India and British India material within the Tapling Collection goes back to the acquisition of Captain Henry Oxenden Weare and Mr Cameron's collections, whilst items within the British Guiana section originate from Edward Chauncy Luard's collection. Other important collections Tapling purchased include Victoriano Gregorio de Ysasi's collection of Spain and Spanish Colonies, the pick of Maitland James Burnett's collection and Marcellus Purnell Castle's collection of British Colonies.[8]

Tapling's international travels also provided opportunities to obtain philatelic material. He acquired Heligoland stamps during a North Sea yachting holiday in 1885, in addition to purchasing British India 1854 Issue stamps during the aborted cricket tour of Ceylon and the Subcontinent mentioned earlier.[9] His contacts and friendships with European philatelists likewise created important opportunities to obtain material, as evidenced by the legendary swap with Philipp La Renotiere von Ferrary of several Cashmere and Indian stamps in exchange for an unused Mauritius 1847 two pence 'Post Office' stamp.[10]

8 Brian J. Birch, *The Fathers of Philately: Inscribed on the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists* (London, 2019), p. 239.

9 Ibid., p. 165.

10 L. N. Williams, 'A Legendary Swap: Tapling and Ferrary – What did Ferrary Receive?', *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* (December 1992), pp. 32-3.

Fig. 5. Photograph of Philipp La Rènotière von Ferrary (1850-1917). Source: *The Philatelic Record*, xi (1889).

Fig. 6. Mauritius 1847 'Post Office' 2d. Deep blue, unused. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, Tapling Collection: Mauritius.

In addition to purchasing major philatelic rarities and collections in their entirety, he also maintained an active correspondence with leading stamp dealers world-wide to obtain particular items. Tapling's chief aim was to obtain every variety unused, only acquiring used stamps when there was no chance of obtaining them in mint condition, or in the exceptional cases where the stamps were more valuable used. By posting advertisements in the Sydney press seeking out former stamps from the Australian Colony of New South Wales, Tapling obtained significant quantities of the 1850 'Sydney Views' and 1851 'Laureate' stamp issues.[11]

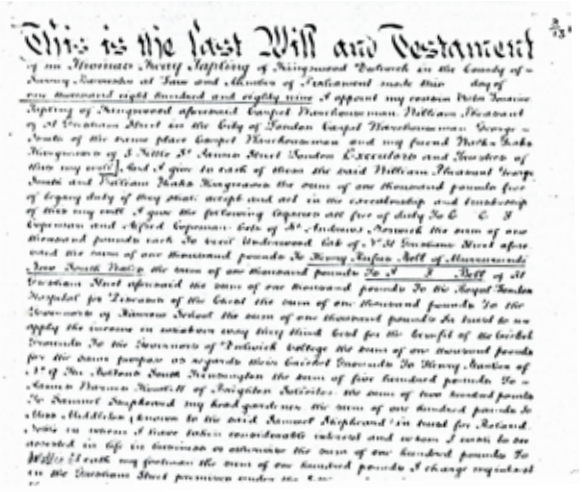
Fig. 7. Photograph of Martial Caillebotte (1853-1910) & Gustave Caillebotte (1848-1894). Source: *The Philatelic Record*, xii (1890).

Fig. 8. Photograph of Judge Frederick Adolphus Philbrick (1835-1910). Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, Photograph Collection.

[11] Hardy and Bacon, pp. 252-3.

By the mid-1880s, the collection's scale, significance and value turned Tapling's mind towards its long-term preservation and management. Spread across both sides of his album leaves, significant parts of the collection were at risk of damage from overcrowding. He therefore purchased one hundred red Moroccan leather bound albums,[12] each containing sixty moveable leaves of grey green tint paper for the final writing-up of his collection, from the prominent philatelist Frederick Adolphus Philbrick.[13] The collection remains mounted on this very paper to the present day. In 1886, Martial and Gustave Caillebotte's important collection came to market. Granted first choice of anything he wanted from it, Tapling found the arrangement and capacity for development within it so impressive that he purchased a significant part of it for £5000, removing from his own albums whatever Caillebotte's collection lacked and parted with the remainder of his surplus material.[14]

Fig. 9. Stamp album purchased from Philbrick for the Tapling Collection, 19th Century. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, General Collections: Stamp Albums.



This is the last Will and Testament

Fig. 10. Front page of Thomas Tapling's Last Will & Testament, 29 October 1889. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections: Tapling File.

On 29 October 1889, Tapling completed his last will and testament, donating his collection to the British Museum in the hope that it would form the basis of a national philatelic collection. Months later, he fell ill on 22 February 1891 and was eventually diagnosed with tuberculosis. Unable to recover, he tragically passed away on 11 April aged thirty-five.[15] The relevant section of the will is worth quoting verbatim as it provides full details regarding the terms and conditions the Museum had to abide by:

> I give to the Trustees of the British Museum my entire collection of postage stamps and everything I have pertaining to the science or hobby of stamp collecting upon condition that it be called 'The Tapling Collection' that it be never broken up or sold that a room or portion of a room be set apart for the collection and that the collection be always

[12] The British Library's Philatelic Collections, General Collection: Philbrick Albums.

[13] Hardy and Bacon, pp. 252-3.

[14] Ibid., pp. 252-3. David R. Beech, 'Note on Caillebotte as a Philatelist', in *Gustave Caillebotte: The Unknown Impressionist* (London, 1996), p. 206.

[15] Birch, p. 241.

> accessible to the President and Secretary for the time being of the Philatelic Society of London. And in furtherance of this object, I bequeath to the said trustees the sum of one thousand pounds free of legacy duty to be applied by them to the mounting and arranging of the said collection or in any other way they may think fit in connection with the said collection.[16]

Establishment of the Philatelic Collections

Tapling's collection arrived at the British Museum and placed under the care of the Department of Printed Books in the Library. This event set in motion several events culminating in the establishment of what is now the British Library's Philatelic Collections. Tapling had written up a small amount of the collection at the time of his death; the remainder comprised a disorganized accumulation of albums, envelopes and loose stamps.[17] With no in-house curatorial expertise available to manage the collection, the Museum's Board of Trustees recruited externally. In May 1892, they appointed Edward Denny Bacon as Philatelic Advisor.[18]

Fig. 11. Photograph of Edward Denny Bacon (1860-1938). Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, Photograph Collection, c. 1890.

Born on 29 August 1860, Bacon began collecting stamps as a child going on to forge an incredibly successful career as a professional philatelist who published extensively across a range of philatelic subjects. Employed by major philatelists like Henry J. Duveen to assist in the management of their collections, Bacon joined the Philatelic Society, London in 1880 and quickly moved up the organization like Tapling. Appointed to the Committee in 1882, by 1893 he played a central role in the formation of the Society's Expert Committee and was eventually made President. Outside of the Society Bacon also rationalized the world-class library of philatelic literature of James Ludovic Lindsay, 26th Earl of Crawford, publishing a catalogue of it in 1911, and was appointed Curator of the Royal Philatelic Collection by King

[16] The British Library's Philatelic Collections: Tapling File: The Last Will & Testament of Thomas Keay Tapling, 29 October 1889.

[17] Edward Denny Bacon, 'Address given to visit of delegates to the Tapling Collection on Friday 29th April 1910', *Monthly Report of the Herts Philatelic Society*, 3rd series, iii (May 1910), p. 148.

[18] Bacon's first invoice dated 10 December 1892 indicates that his starting date of employment was 21 May 1892: The British Library's Philatelic Collections: The Tapling Collection Accounts.

George V in 1913, a post he held until his retirement in 1938.[19] Working at the British Museum for three days a week, Bacon's role involved arranging and mounting the collection as well as writing it up for exhibition, a task taking seven years to complete. Bacon received a salary of £100 every six months, reduced to £75 from 21 November until the project's completion in mid-September 1899.

Table 1. Breakdown of Edward Denny Bacon's salary, 1892-1899[20]

Invoice No.	Invoice Date	Period	Salary	Payment Date
1	10/12/1892	21/05/1892-21/11/1892	£100	16/12/1892
2	14/06/1893	21/11/1892-21/05/1893	£100	16/06/1893
3	04/12/1893	21/05/1893-21/11/1893	£100	08/12/1893
4	28/05/1894	21/11/1893-21/05/1894	£100	12/06/1894
5	28/11/1894	21/05/1894-21/11/1894	£100	06/12/1894
6	06/06/1895	21/11/1894-21/05/1895	£100	08/06/1895
7	03/12/1895	21/05/1895-21/11/1895	£100	05/12/1895
8	30/05/1896	21/11/1895-21/05/1896	£100	02/06/1896
9	24/11/1896	21/05/1896-21/11/1896	£100	25/11/1896
10	26/05/1897	21/11/1896-21/05/1897	£75	28/05/1897
11	27/11/1897	21/05/1897-21/11/1897	£75	02/12/1897
12	24/05/1898	21/11/1897-21/05/1898	£75	27/05/1898
13	13/09/1899	21/05/1898-13/09/1899	£75	19/09/1899

Fig. 12. Jane Elizabeth Hamilton (1874-1957). Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, Jane Hamilton File.

Three years later, the Board of Trustees decided to recruit an Assistant to help Bacon and speed up the project's completion. In July 1895, Jane Elizabeth Hamilton secured an

[19] De Worms, pp. 102-3. Captain B. Rogers-Tillstone and Frank Howard White, *The Royal Philatelic Society London, 1869-1969* (Glasgow, 1969), p. 124.

[20] Bacon's salary breakdown based on thirteen dated invoices in The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

interview for the post via her friend Mrs Salmon who was acquainted with Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, then Principal Librarian at the British Museum. Born in Hackney in 1874, Hamilton possessed no knowledge or interest in philately, eventually developing a career in professional photography with her sister. Employed for an average thirty-hour working week, she performed the mechanical task of mounting the stamps under Bacon's direction. Recognized as the first female employed in a collections-based role at the British Museum, she experienced initial difficulties in receiving her salary.[21] However, Bacon's assistance quickly redressed this issue with her salary settled at 1 shilling 6 pence per hour, reduced to 1 shilling per hour from 15 December 1896 until the termination of her employment on 11 October 1897.

Table 2. Breakdown of Jane Elizabeth Hamilton's salary, 1895-1897[22]

Invoice No.	Invoice Date	Period	Salary	Hours Worked	Hourly Rate	Payment Date
1	18/10/1895	30/08/1895-12/10/1895	£16 13s 0d	222	1s 6d	16/10/1895
2	04/12/1895	14/10/1895-29/11/1895	£15 9s 0d	206	1s 6d	05/12/1895
3	29/02/1896	02/12/1895-24/02/1896	£22 17s 6d	305	1s 6d	03/03/1896
4	Undated	25/02/1896-31/03/1896	£11 11s 9d	154 ½	1s 6d	07/04/1896
5	01/05/1896	01/05/1896-30/04/1896	£8 17s 9d	118 ½	1s 6d	04/05/1896
6	01/06/1896	01/05/1896-29/05/1896	£8 18s 6d	119	1s 6d	02/06/1896
7	01/07/1896	01/06/1896-30/06/1896	£9 3s 0d	122	1s 6d	07/07/1896
8	27/07/1896	01/07/1896-24/07/1896	£8 0s 6d	107	1s 6d	28/07/1896
9	01/10/1896	27/07/1896-30/09/1896	£11 11s 0d	154	1s 6d	02/10/1896
10	Undated	01/10/1896-30/10/1896	£9 11s 3d	127 ½	1s 6d	03/11/1896
11	01/12/1896	02/01/1896-30/11/1896	£9 2s 3d	121 ½	1s 6d	02/12/1896
12	Undated	01/12/1896-14/12/1896	£4 8s 6d	59	1s 6d	17/12/1896
13	04/01/1897	15/12/1896-31/12/1896	£3 8s 0d	68	1s	17/12/1896
14	01/02/1897	01/01/1897-29/01/1897	£5 18s 6d	118 ½	1s	02/02/1897

[21] Note written by Cuthbert Hamilton Ellis on the back of Jane Elizabeth Hamilton's photograph dated 25 November 1996. Copy held in the British Library's Philatelic Collections: Jane Hamilton File. Mrs Herbert M. Ellis, 'Tapling Collection Memories', *Philatelic Magazine*, xliii (12 May 1939), pp. 409-10.

[22] Hamilton's salary breakdown based on twenty-two dated invoices in The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

15	05/03/1897	01/02/1897-27/02/1897	£5 19s 0d	119	1s	06/03/1897
16	01/04/1897	01/03/1897-31/03/1897	£6 16s 6d	136 ½	1s	01/04/1897
17	03/05/1897	01/04/1897-30/04/1897	£5 13s 0d	113	1s	04/04/1897
18	01/06/1897	03/05/1897-31/05/1897	£6 4s 6d	124 ½	1s	02/06/1897
19	01/07/1897	01/06/1897-30/06/1897	£5 17s 0d	117	1s	02/07/1897
20	06/08/1897	01/07/1897-16/07/1897	£3 8s 0d	68	1s	10/08/1897
21	04/10/1897	04/08/1897-20/09/1897	£10 0s 0d	200	1s	04/10/1897
22	12/10/1897	04/10/1897-11/10/1897	£1 12s 9d	32 ¾	1s	12/10/1897

In addition to staff, the Trustees also allocated office space for Bacon and Hamilton to work on the collection within one of the British Museum's rooms. Until fairly recently, its location remained a total mystery. During an interview in 1939 Jane Hamilton provided an important clue enabling the approximate location to be determined. During the interview she stated: 'In the room in which I worked there was a particular show book that visitors were frequently brought in to see; it was an encyclopaedia I believe in two volumes in which were notes on "Matrimony" put in the margin by King Henry VIII.'[23]

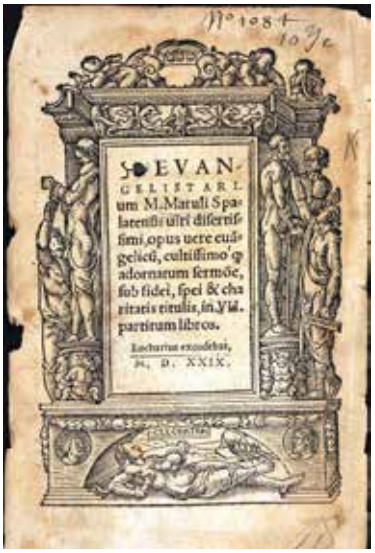


Fig. 13. Marko Marulić Splićanin, *Evangelistarium* (Cologne, 1529). The British Library's General Reference Collection: 843.k.13.

The monograph in question was not an encyclopaedia, but a copy of Marko Marulić's *Evangelistarium*, published at Cologne in 1529, forming part of the Royal Library, acquired by the British Museum Library in 1757.[24] The book's shelfmark, 843.k.13, indicates the

[23] Ellis, p. 410.

[24] Milan Grba, 'Marko Marulic and the British Library', *Colloquia Maruliana,* xx (2011), pp. 197-226. Andrea Clarke, 'Henry VIII and Marko Marulić's *Evangelistarium*', *Colloquia Maruliana, xx* (2011), pp. 167-75.

office's location in the North Wing of the British Museum Library, a space known to contain staff working areas. This also placed their working area in close proximity to the Tapling Collection material publicly exhibited in the King's Library.[25] Her interview also reveals they shared the room with an assistant working for the Department of Printed Books named Mr De Villiers and that when not in use the collection was stored away in rows within an iron safe, enclosed in wooden casing.[26]

Consumables and supplies were also required to mount the Tapling Collection for public exhibition. The security-printing firm Waterlow and Sons, as the Museum's main supplier, provided specimen trays as well as board and stamp hinges between 1893 and 1897. Likewise, the Museum purchased over 45,000 stamp hinges from the philatelic firm Stanley Gibbons and Company Limited between 1895 and 1897. Frederick Adolphus Philbrick sold an additional 350 leaves of mounted and gilt Whatman paper to the Museum, whilst Hollis and Son sourced forty-four bottles of 'Opal Mucilage' as an adhesive agent. Finally, the box-manufacturing firm Filmer and Son sold thirty airtight cloth boxes with patterns and loose card in three different sizes to store Tapling's postal stationery collection.

Table 3. Breakdown of suppliers and commodities for the Tapling Collection, 1893-1897[27]

Supplier	Commodities	Quantity	Invoice	Payment Date
Waterlow	Extra Thick Mounts	100 Items	£12 18s. 4d.	10/03/1893
Waterlow	Postage Stamp Mounts	10,000 Items	£4 5s. 0d.	10/03/1893
Waterlow	Sample Postage Stamp Trays	2 Items	£0 6s. 0d.	07/11/1893
Waterlow	White Card Mounts	10,000 Items	£4 4s. 0s	28/01/1895
Waterlow	Rectangular Shaped Cardboard Mounts	2,000 Items	-	20/02/1896
Waterlow	Triangular Shaped Cardboard Mounts	300 Items	£2 15s 0d	20/02/1896
Waterlow	Stamp Mounts at 11/6	19,000 items	£10 18s 6d	29/09/1896
Waterlow	Sheets thin ivory card plan cut 15 x 12	48 Sheets	£0 7s 6d	29/09/1896
Waterlow	Foolscap Bristol Boards 12 x 15	48 Sheets	£0 10s 0d	28/05/1897
Gibbons	Mounts	10,000 Items	£1 2s. 6d.	08/10/1895
Gibbons	Mounts	15,000 Items	£1 13s 9d	07/05/1896
Gibbons	Mounts	20,000 Items	£2 5s. 0d	30/01/1897
Philbrick	Mounted & Gilt Whatman Paper	350 Leaves	£5 2s 6d	27/11/1895
Hollis	Opal Mucilage	12 Bottles	10s 3d	08/04/1896
Hollis	Opal Mucilage	12 Bottles	10s 3s	23/10/1896
Hollis	Opal Mucilage	20 Bottles	17/-	30/06/1897

[25] Phil Harris, 'Quart into a pint pot: the accommodation problems of the British Museum Library. <https://www.bl.uk/picturing-places/articles/quart-into-a-pint-pot-the-accommodation-problems-of-the-british-museum-library> [Accessed 5 June 2021]. David R. Beech, *A Guide to Philatelic Research at the British Library* (London, 2019), p. 11. Fred J. Melville. *The Tapling Collection of Stamps and Postal Stationery at the British Museum* (London, 1905), p. 21.

[26] Ellis, p. 410.

[27] Data based on dated invoices, The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

Filmer	Boxes in cloth with patterns, loose card etc	13 Boxes	£2 12s 0d	27/11/1895
Filmer	Boxes in cloth with patterns, loose card etc	12 Boxes	£2 11s 0d	27/11/1895
Filmer	Boxes in cloth with patterns, loose card etc	5 Boxes	£1 2s 6d	27/11/1895

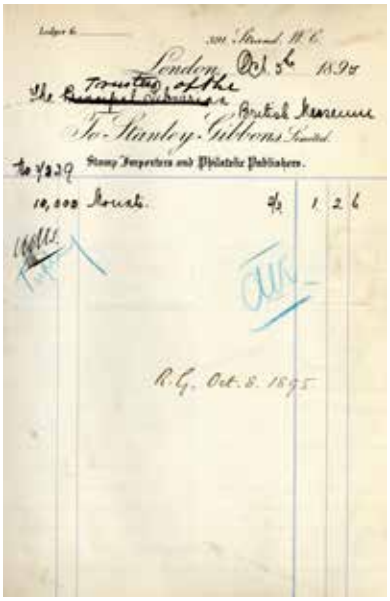


Fig. 14. Stanley Gibbons Limited Invoice for 10,000 stamp mounts, 5 October 1895. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections: The Tapling Collection Accounts.

TELEPHONE Nº 128.
London. 14 Nov 1895.
Bought of Filmer & Son
ESTABLISHED 1892
BOX MANUFACTURERS & PATTERN CARD MOUNTERS,
MAKERS TO THE GOVERNMENT
The British Museum
13 boxes in cloth with patterns, loose card etc 2 12 0
12 " " " " 4/3 2 11 0
5 " " " " 4/6 1 2 6
£ 6. 5. 6
R.G. Nov 27 1895

Fig. 15. Filmer & Son Invoice for cloth boxes in three different sizes, 14 November 1895. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections: The Tapling Collection Accounts.

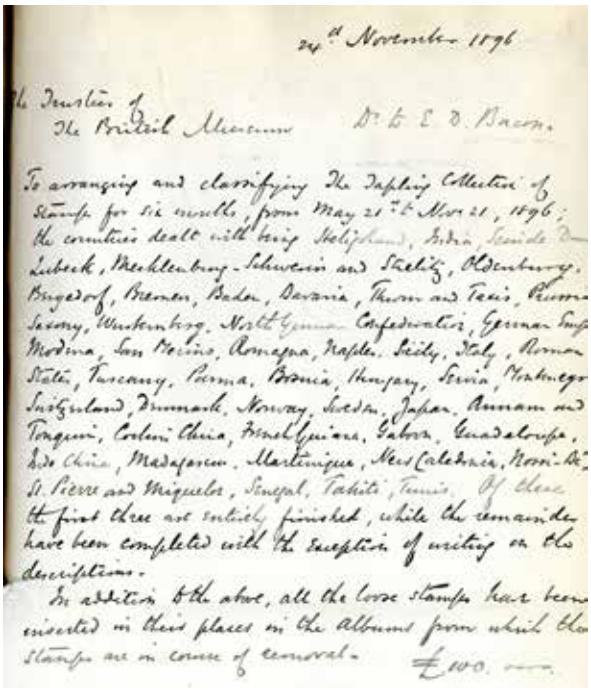
Arranging, mounting and writing up the Tapling Collection

Having previously known Thomas Keay Tapling and assisted him with the collection's formation and management, Bacon possessed solid insights into his vision for the collection's extent, structure and organization. Arranged by country, then chronologically, Tapling's intention was

> to have each stamp hinged and mounted upon a piece of white card with a red line round it. The stamps on these cards were then to be affixed to the pages according to the date of issue – one specimen of each value of the issue being placed first, and the shades and varieties of each value following in order; so that, in the case of a large issue, the stamps of which might extend over several pages, the student would see at a glance the number of values composing that issue.[28]

[28] Hardy and Bacon, *The Stamp Collector*, p. 253.

At the end of each section are the non-postal stamps, as well as essays and proofs for the respective issues for each country.[29]


24th November 1896

The Trustees of
The British Museum

Dr to E. D. Bacon.

To arranging and classifying the Tapling Collection of stamps for six months, from May 21st to Nov 21, 1896; the countries dealt with being Heligoland, Lübeck, Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Strelitz, Oldenburg, Brunswick, Bremen, Baden, Bavaria, Thurn and Taxis, Saxony, Wurtemburg, North German Confederation, German Empire, Modena, San Marino, Romagna, Naples, Sicily, Italy, Roman States, Tuscany, Parma, Bosnia, Hungary, Servia, Montenegro, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Japan, Annam and Tonquin, Cochin China, French Guiana, Gabon, Guadaloupe, Indo China, Madagascar, Martinique, New Caledonia, Nossi-Be, St. Pierre and Miquelon, Senegal, Tahiti, Tunis. Of these the first three are entirely finished, while the remainder have been completed with the exception of writing up the descriptions.

In addition to the above, all the loose stamps have been inserted in their places in the albums from which the stamps are in course of removal.

£100. —

Fig. 16. Edward Denny Bacon's Report about work undertaken on the Tapling Collection between 21 May & 21 November 1896, 24 November 1896. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections: The Tapling Collection Accounts.

To receive his salary, Bacon submitted reports twice a year detailing the work undertaken on the Tapling Collection. Each one survives making it possible to chart the collection's management and development in detail. The work comprised thirteen different phases within three distinct methodological periods. The first seven phases undertaken between 7 May 1892 and 21 November 1895 cover the first period during which Bacon was largely working alone. He began by unpacking and arranging the collection, incorporating stamps, envelopes and other loose material into the main body of albums. He began rationalizing the postal stationery material, and worked on the stamps, arranging, mounting and writing up each section systematically.[30]

[29] James A. Mackay, *The Tapling Collection of Postage and Telegraph Stamps and Postal Stationery* (London, 1964), p. 9.

[30] General observations based upon Bacon's comments within invoices dated: 10 December 1892, 14 June 1893, 4 December 1893, 28 May 1894, 28 November 1894, 6 June 1895 and 3 December 1895, The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

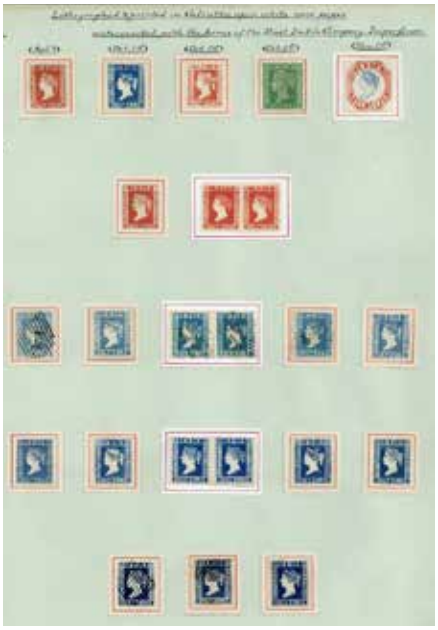


Fig. 17. India 1854 issue stamps illustrating the general arrangement of Tapling's Collection. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, the Tapling Collection: India, p. 1.

During phase one from 7 May to 21 November 1892, Bacon completed the sections for Mauritius, Lagos, Malta, Gibraltar, Ionian Islands, Buenos Ayres and the Hawaiian Islands.[31] Phase two, between 21 November 1892 and 21 May 1893, saw the completion of New Brunswick and Newfoundland whilst the majority of New South Wales was undertaken.[32] During phase three, spanning 21 May to 21 November 1893, New South Wales, British Columbia, Vancouver Island, Canada, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and British Guiana were finished.[33] Great Britain, Cyprus and the Reunion Islands were all finished during phase four, 21 November 1893 to 21 May 1894.[34] During phase five (21 May to 21 November 1894) work focused on British West Indian and South American material with the sections for Antigua, Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, British Honduras, Dominica, Falkland Islands, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, Nevis, Tobago and Trinidad all being completed.[35] The sections on St Christopher, St Lucia, St Vincent, Turks Islands, Virgin Islands, Ceylon, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Gambia were competed during phase six from 21 November 1894 to 21 May 1895.[36] Finally, phase seven, covering the period from 21 May to 21 November 1895, saw the completion of work on the Fiji Islands, Natal, St Helena, Tasmania, Labuan, North Borneo and Queensland.[37]

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[31] Invoice dated 10 December 1892, The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

[32] Invoice dated 14 June 1893, The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

[33] Invoice dated 4 December 1893, The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

[34] Invoice dated 28 May 1894, The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

[35] Invoice dated 28 November 1894, The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

[36] Invoice dated 6 June 1895, The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

[37] Invoice dated 3 December 1895, The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

Phases eight to twelve, spanning 21 November 1895 to 21 March 1898, form the second period of work, loosely correlating with the appointment of Jane Hamilton. The insertion of loose material into the collection's main albums and the arrangement of the postal stationery collection continued. Yet from this period, focus was largely on arranging and mounting the collection, whilst the writing-up for the major part of it was deferred to a later date.[38] Phase eight, between 21 November 1895 and 21 May 1896, saw the completion of Western Australia, the United States of America, Griqualand, Cape of Good Hope, British Bechuanaland, South Australia and Victoria. A further sixteen sections were arranged and mounted.[39]

Phase nine, from 21 May to 21 November 1896, saw the completion of Heligoland, British India and 'Scinde'. Bacon and Hamilton then arranged and mounted a further forty-six sections.[40] New Zealand, Shanghai, China, Formosa, 'Corea', the Asia Minor Steamship Navigation Company of Smyrna, South African Republic & Transvaal, Bangkok, Johor, Pahang, Perak, Selangor, Sungei Ujong, Angola, Cape Verde Islands, Guinea, Macao, Mozambique, Portuguese India, St Thomas & Prince, Timor and Spain were completed during phase ten between 21 November 1896 and 21 May 1897. In addition to this work the sections for France, Alsace Lorraine, Straits Settlements, Hong Kong, Bavaria, San Marino and Romagna previously arranged and mounted were written up for completion, whilst a further twenty-nine sections were arranged and mounted.[41]

Fig. 18. New Zealand 1855-1857 issue with rare 1d denomination, illustrating how the Tapling Collection Developed. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, the Tapling Collection: New Zealand, p. 1.

For phase eleven (21 May to 21 November 1897) worked was completed for Cuba, Puerto Rico, Philippine Islands, Fernando Poo, Rio d'Oro, Cashmere, Alwur and Bahawalpur. Japan, which had been arranged and mounted during an earlier phase, was now written up for

[38] General observations based upon Bacon's comments contained within invoices dated: 30 May 1896, 24 November 1896, 26 May 1897, 27 November 1897 and 24 May 1898, The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

[39] Invoice dated 30 May 1896, The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

[40] Invoice dated 24 November 1896, The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

[41] Invoice dated 26 May 1897, The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

completion, whilst another forty-one sections were arranged and mounted.[42] During phase twelve, from 21 November 1897 to 21 May 1898, the Zemstvo stamps of the Russian Rural Posts, Bolivia, Chili, St Thomas, Porto Cabello as well as Peru were all completed and a further sixteen sections arranged and mounted.[43]

The thirteenth and final phase, from 21 May 1898 to 13 September 1899, formed the third period of the collection's development. Mexico and the local stamp issues for the United States of America were systematically organized, mounted and written up. However, the bulk of the work undertaken in this phase involved the writing up of the previously mounted 143 sections to complete the job.[44]

Table 4. Tapling Collection sections written up in phase thirteen, 21 May 1898- 13 September 1899[45]

Bergedorf	Turkey	Roumania	Egypt	Suez Canal Company
Bulgaria	South Bulgaria	Eastern Roumelia	Afghanistan	Austria
Austrian-Italy	Danubian Steam Navigation Company	Columbian Republic	Antioquia	Bolivar
Cauca	Cundinamarca	Magdalena	Panama	Santander
Tolima	Venezuela	Brazil	Paraguay	Bhore
Bikanir	Chamba	Faridkot	Gwalior	Holkar
Jeypore	Jhalawar	Kappurthala	Nabha	Nepal
Bhopal	Hyderabad	Jhind	Poonch	Puttialla
Rajpeepla	Sirmoor	Nowanugger	Soruth	Travancore
Wadhwan	Bokhara	Siam	Orange Free State	New South African Republic
Swaziland	Stellaland	Matabeleland	Madagascar	Nyassa Company
Nicaragua	Costa Rica	Haiti	Dominican Republic	Liberia
Congo State	Honduras	Guatemala	Salvador	Uruguay
Sarawak	Samoa	Tonga	Schleswig- Holstein	Argentine Republic
Cordoba	Corrientes	Portugal	Azores	Madeira
Poland	Russia	Finland	Helsingfors	Tammersfors
Helsingfors Boback Steamship Company	Tavestehus & Helsingfors Steam Packet Company	Thyra Steamship Company	Wenden	Russian Levant Company
Luxemburg	Moresnet	Dutch Indies	Holland	Belgium
Roman States	Parma	Tuscany	Naples	Sicily

[42] Invoice dated 27 November 1897, The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

[43] Invoice dated 24 May 1898, The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

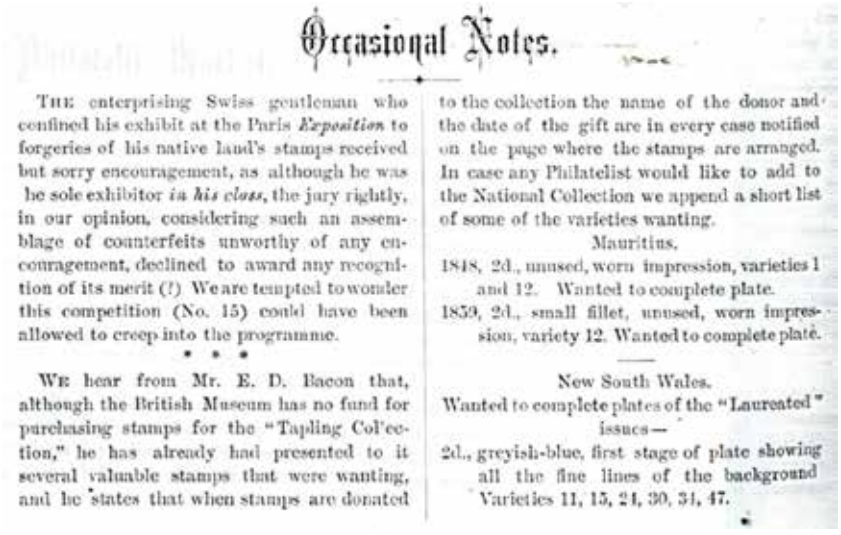
[44] General observations based upon Bacon's comments contained within the invoice dated 18 September 1899, The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

[45] Data based on invoice dated 18 September 1899, The British Library's Philatelic Collections, The Tapling Collection: Accounts.

German Empire	German Colonies	North German Confederation	Prussia	Modena
Brunswick	Hamburg	Hanover	Thurn & Taxis	Saxony
Wurtemburg	Lubeck	Mecklenburg-Schwerin	Mecklenburg-Strelitz	Oldenburg
French Colonies	Baden	Bremen	Greece	Persia
Curacao	Surinam	Confederate States	Norway	Italy
Denmark	Iceland	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Hungary	Serbia
Montenegro	Sweden	Ecuador	Senegal	Tahiti
Tunis	Annam & Tonquin	Cochin China	French Guiana	Gabon
Guadeloupe	Indochina	Madagascar	Martinique	New Caledonia
Nossi Bé	St Pierre & Miquelon	Switzerland	-	-

Donations to the Tapling Collection, 1892-1899

During the arrangement, mounting and writing-up of the collection, various gaps were identified but the British Museum possessed no funds to purchase items and fill them. Consequently, Bacon did so from his own private resources in the form of personal donations. In October 1892, he extended this, publishing the first in a series of appeals for donations from the wider philatelic and collecting communities in the Occasional Notes Section of the *London Philatelist*. It resulted in 129 separate donations comprising hundreds of items to the British Museum between 1892 and 1899.



Occasional Notes.

THE enterprising Swiss gentleman who confined his exhibit at the Paris *Exposition* to forgeries of his native land's stamps received but sorry encouragement, as although he was the sole exhibitor *in his class*, the jury rightly, in our opinion, considering such an assemblage of counterfeits unworthy of any encouragement, declined to award any recognition of its merit (!) We are tempted to wonder this competition (No. 15) could have been allowed to creep into the programme.

* * *

WE hear from Mr. E. D. Bacon that, although the British Museum has no fund for purchasing stamps for the "Tapling Collection," he has already had presented to it several valuable stamps that were wanting, and he states that when stamps are donated to the collection the name of the donor and the date of the gift are in every case notified on the page where the stamps are arranged. In case any Philatelist would like to add to the National Collection we append a short list of some of the varieties wanting.

Mauritius.

1848, 2d., unused, worn impression, varieties 1 and 12. Wanted to complete plate.

1859, 2d., small fillet, unused, worn impression, variety 12. Wanted to complete plate.

New South Wales.

Wanted to complete plates of the "Laureated" issues—

2d., greyish-blue, first stage of plate showing all the fine lines of the background Varieties 11, 15, 24, 30, 31, 47.

Fig. 19. The first public appeal for donations to the Tapling Collection. Source*:* Edward Denny Bacon, *'Occasional Notes', London Philatelist*, i (October 1892).

Upon a donation's receipt at the Museum, it was broken up, rearranged and mounted on relevant pages throughout the Tapling Collection by Bacon and Hamilton. Upon a typical page where a donation is mounted, Bacon placed a symbol next to the item. Next to the corresponding symbol used at the bottom of the page are the donor's name and dates of donation. For example, the British Virgin Islands section of the Tapling Collection includes

this page containing die proofs for the December 1866 issue donated by Edward Denny Bacon and Philipp La Renotiere von Ferrary in 1893 and 1895. The presence of such data on the pages enables a reconstruction of the donations for detailed analysis.[46]

Fig. 20. Die Proofs for the British Virgin Islands 1866 (Dec.) Issue donated to the Tapling Collection by Edward Denny Bacon & Philipp La Renotiere von Ferrary. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, the Tapling Collection: Virgin Islands, p. 8.

Analysis of donations via specific segments of the philatelic community reveals the most numerous donors were individual philatelists comprising 79% of the total donations made to the collection, followed by corporate donations comprising 10.5% as well as Universities and Government Departments totalling up 6% and 1.5% respectively. The remaining 3% were impossible to categorize since the provenance data is incomplete. Furthermore, boundaries between these distinctions are fluid since some of the individual donors are known stamp dealers, whilst it is unclear whether the University donations are of a personal or institutional nature.

Seventeen individuals donated more than once to the collection, including known associates of Tapling and some of the most notable early philatelists. No fewer than ten of the forty-three 'Fathers of Philately' who died before the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists was established made donations. Inscribed in the scrolls on the sides of the roll, they are Breitfuss, Castle, Ferrary, and Harrison, the 8th Earl of Kingston, Philbrick, Smith, Tilleard, Westoby and Wright. The remaining five individuals Bate, Chapman, Diena, Evans and Hadlow are all signatories on the roll.

Two donors, Grand Duke Alexei Mikhailovich of Russia and Henry Ernest Newcomen Kingston Tenison, the 8th Earl of Kingston, were members of royalty and the aristocracy. Leading stamp dealers Brown, Ewen, Giwelb, Hadlow, Mekeel, Morley, Ridpath and Wilson are included in this category since it is unknown whether their donations were in a personal or corporate capacity. Two early female philatelists, Miss A. Cassells and Miss Alice Zimmern, also made donations, as did Captain Charles Louis Norris Newman.[47]

[46] Richard Scott Morel, 'Donations to the Tapling Collection from the Philatelic Community, 1891-1899', *The London Philatelist*, cxxix (September 2020), pp. 337-8.

[47] Brian J. Birch, *Biographies of Philatelists and Dealers* (Wigan, 2007). Brian J. Birch, *The Fathers of Philately Inscribed on the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists*. R. A. Butler, *The History of the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists* (London, 1990).

Table 5. Private donations to the Tapling Collection, 1891-1899[48]

Individual	Pages	Donations
Grand Duke Alexis Michaelovich (1875-1895)	1	1
Edward Denny Bacon (1860-1938)	40	18
Arthur Thomas Bate (c. 1850-1921)	1	1
Erskine Beveridge (1851-1920)	1	1
Dr George Thompson Bishop (1865-1935)	1	1
W.W. Blest	6	3
Samuel Bostock	1	1
Friedrich Andreas Breitfuss (1851-1911)	2	2
William Brown (1864-1927)	6	5
George Campbell	5	4
Miss A. Cassels	4	2
Marcellus Purnell Castle (1847-1917)	3	2
Samuel Chapman (1859-1943)	23	3
Anthony Buck Creeke Jr (1860-1932)	1	1
G. E. Cutting	1	1
Dr Emilio Diena (1860-1941)	4	1
Robert Ehrenbach (1858-1906)	1	1
Major Edward Benjamin Evans (1846-1922)	8	7
Herbert L'Estrange Ewen (1876-1912)	3	1
Philipp La Rénotière von Ferrary (1850-1917)	18	3
Oliver Firth (1860-1913)	3	1
Lachlan Gibb (1852-1922)	1	1
Morris Giwelb (1853-1937)	1	1
William Hadlow (1861-1931)	3	1
Gilbert Harrison (1858-1894)	1	1
Mr Justen	1	1
8th Earl of Kingston (1846-1896)	3	3
G. T. Koster	1	1
Asher Levy	3	2
Mr H. F. Lowe (c. 1860-1938)	1	1
Frederick George Calvert Lundy (1859-)	1	1
Charles Haviland Mekeel (1861-1921)	9	1
Dr Gustave Michelsen (1864-)	2	1
Walter Morley (1863-1936)	6	2
William Moser (c.1853-1909)	1	1
Prof. Arthur Sampson Napier (1853-1916)	1	1
Capt. Charles Louis Norris Newman	3	1
Theodor Notthafft (1853-1898)	3	1

[48] The British Library's Philatelic Collections, Tapling Collection. Donation details taken from each page where recorded. Biographical details enhanced using Brian J. Birch, *Biographies of Philatelists and Dealers*; Birch, *The Fathers of Philately Inscribed on the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists*; Butler, *The History of the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists*.

Judge Frederick Adolphus Philbrick (1836-1910)	1	1
H. S. Porter	1	1
Thomas Ridpath (c.1850-1900)	2	1
Adolf Rosenberg	2	1
Albert Scheindling	1	1
Charles Davis Sherbon	12	1
Gordon Smith (1856-1905)	4	2
John Alexander Tilleard (1850-1913)	3	2
J. R. F. Turner (1867-1922)	3	2
William Amos Scarborough Westoby (1815-1899)	1	1
Walter T. Willett (c.1871-1913)	1	1
William Thomas Wilson (1847-1932)	11	3
Charles Windsor	1	1
Hastings Elwin Wright (1861-1897)	1	1
Alice Zimmern	1	1

The first six corporate organizations donating to the collection were major philatelic dealers from whom Tapling had likely made purchases during his lifetime. These include Stanley Gibbons Limited as well as Theodore Buhl and Company, which purchased Pemberton, Wilson & Company – Tapling's favourite dealer. The Brown in Brown and Skipton was of course, the same William Brown who figures in the list of individual donors discussed earlier.[49]

The remaining organizations can be categorized as stamp-issuing entities. The National Telephone Company donated some of its own stamps missing from the collection in 1894. Between 1893 and 1894, the bursars for several of the colleges forming the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge donated sheets of stamps used to prepay college mail delivered by messenger. Finally, the Post Office Department of Canada made a single donation of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia stamps on 24 August 1894.

Table 6. Corporate donations to the Tapling Collection, 1891-1899[50]

Stamp Dealers	Pages	Donations
Brown and Skipton	2	1
G. Hamilton Smith & Company	11	1
John Boulton and Company	1	1
Stanley Gibbons Ltd	27	14
Theodor Buhl and Company	2	2
Whitfield King and Company	1	1
Other organizations/Institutions		
National Telephone Company	2	1
Post Office Department of Canada	2	1
All Souls' College, Oxford	1	1
Keble College, Oxford	1	1

[49] Birch, *Biographies of Philatelists and Dealers*.

[50] The British Library's Philatelic Collections, Tapling Collection. Donation details taken from each page where recorded.

St John's College, Oxford	1	1
Queens' College, Cambridge	1	1

Finally, analysis of the donations by geographical region reveals the global coverage of the donated items; spanning sixty-seven of the 268 sections comprising the Tapling Collection.[51] The majority of the donations hail from the Americas and Caribbean Islands, followed consecutively by material from Asia, Europe, Africa and the Pacific.

Table 7. Geographical coverage of donations to the Tapling Collection, 1891-1899[52]

Country or Issuing Authority	Donations recorded on pages
Afghanistan	1
Antigua	1
Antioquia	2
Bahamas	1
Barbados	1
Bavaria	1
Bermuda	1
Bolivia	1
British Bechuanaland	3
British Guiana	2
Canada	3
Cape of Good Hope	2
Ceylon	18
Chili	1
Colombia	2
Confederate States of America	2
Danubian Steam Navigation Company	1
Eritrea	1
Gambia	1
German Colonies	2
Great Britain	73
Hanover	3
Heligoland	5
Holkar	1
India	4
Italy	2
Japan	3
Labuan	1
Matabeleland	1
Mauritius	2
Mexico	44

[51] Morel, pp. 339-42.

[52] The British Library's Philatelic Collections, Tapling Collection. Details taken from each page where donation is recorded.

Natal	2
New Brunswick	2
Newfoundland	4
New South Wales	5
New Zealand	2
Nicaragua	1
Nova Scotia	1
Nyassa Company	1
Orange Free State	2
Philippine Islands	1
Porto Rico	1
Prince Edward Island	2
Queensland	7
Reunion	1
Roman States	1
Russia	8
St Lucia	1
St Thomas, La Guaira and Porto Cabello	2
St Vincent	2
Salvador	1
Selangor	1
Shanghai	2
Siam	2
South African Republic	2
South Australia	3
Straits Settlements	1
Sungei Ujong	1
Switzerland	1
Tasmania	6
Trinidad	2
Turks Island	2
United States	1
United States Locals	1
Venezuela	1
Victoria	5
Virgin Islands	2
Wenden	1
TOTAL	273

The donated material ranges from the commonplace to major philatelic rarities representing every conceivable format including essays, proofs, sheets, blocks, pairs, errors, varieties, covers and partials as well as historic manuscripts. Grand Duke Alexei Mikhailovich donated Russian 1864-1879 issue colour trials to the Tapling Collection shortly before his death in

1894;[53] and Henry J. Duveen donated a Great Britain 1 penny Mulready Envelope postmarked 6 May 1840 in 1898. The latter item was written by the Italian refugee, Sir Antonio Genesio Maria Panizzi, then Keeper of Printed Books who went on to become Principal Librarian of the British Museum Library in 1856.[54]

Fig. 21. Great Britain 1840 1d Mulready Envelope Postmarked 6 May 1840 in the hand of Panizzi donated to the Tapling Collection by Henry J. Duveen c. 1898. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, the Tapling Collection: Great Britain.

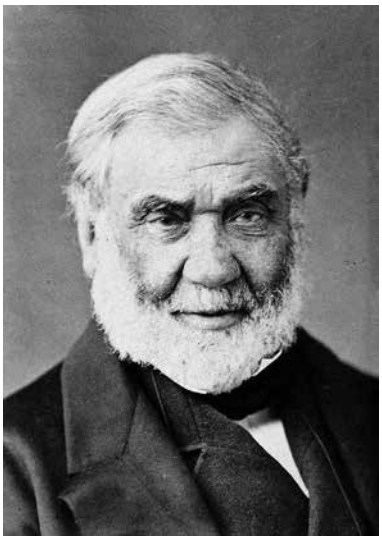


Fig. 22. Photograph of Sir Antonio Genesio Maria Panizzi (1797-1879). Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, Photograph Collection.

Exhibiting the Tapling Collection

The donation of the Tapling Collection to the British Museum generated much interest, with the public eagerly awaiting its exhibition. In 1897, King George V, then the Duke of Edinburgh, even made arrangements with the Museum for a private viewing of the collection.[55] To satisfy public expectations, Bacon began exhibiting parts of the Tapling Collection within the King's Library at the British Museum as early as October 1893. Continually changed over as work on the collection progressed,[56] he published regular public announcements for the exhibition in the philatelic press.[57] These announcements enable the

[53] The British Library's Philatelic Collections, Tapling Collection: Russia, p. 17a.

[54] The British Library's Philatelic Collections, Tapling Collection, Great Britain. E. D. Bacon, 'Presentations to the Tapling Collection', *The London Philatelist*, viii (January 1899), p. 15.

[55] 'Editorial', *Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal*, vii (27 February 1897), p. 129.

[56] Mrs Herbert M. Ellis, 'Tapling Collection Memories', p. 410.

[57] *Philatelic Journal of Great Britain* (10 October 1893), pp. 162-3; (10 January 1894), p. 5; (15 July 1897), p. 170. *Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal* (29 September 1894), p. 34; (31 December 1894), p. 83; (30 April 1895). p. 147; (30 September 1895), p. 36; (31 January 1896), p. 122; (30 June 1896), p. 203; (31 October 1896), p. 58 (30 June 1897), p. 209; (30 October 1897), p. 63 (31 January 1898), p. 39; (30 September 1898), p. 35; (28 February 1899), p. 125; (30 September 1899), p. 58. *The London Philatelist*, ix (November 1900), p. 284.

exhibition schedule to be reconstructed, highlighting what sections of the collection were exhibited when. In conjunction with Bacon's reports on the collection's development, it becomes clear that exhibitions and outreach work formed a central component of Bacon's work in addition to the collection's arrangement, mounting and writing up.

Fig. 23. Photograph of the King's Library in the British Museum in the nineteenth century. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, Photograph Collection.

Table 7. Public exhibitions of the Tapling Collection, 1893-1900

Postal Authority	Period Completed	Date Exhibited
New Brunswick	21/11/1892-21/05/1893	October 1893
Newfoundland	21/11/1892-21/05/1893	October 1893
Nova Scotia	21/05/1893-21/11/1893	October 1893
British Columbia	21/05/1893-21/11/1893	October 1893
Prince Edward Island	21/05/1893-21/11/1893	October 1893
Buenos Ayres	07/05/1892-21/11/1892	October 1893
Sandwich Islands	21/05/1893-21/11/1893	October 1893
New South Wales	21/11/1892-21/11/1893	January 1894
Canada	21/05/1893-21/11/1893	January 1894
Lagos	21/11/1892-21/11/1892	January 1894
Ionian Islands	21/11/1892-21/11/1892	January 1894
Gibraltar	21/11/1892-21/11/1892	January 1894
Great Britain	21/11/1893-21/05/1894	September 1894
Cyprus	21/11/1893-21/05/1894	September 1894
Antigua	21/05/1894-21/11/1894	December 1894
Other West Indian Stamps	21/05/1894-21/11/1894	December 1894
British Guiana (Later Issues)	21/05/1893-21/11/1893	April 1895
British Honduras	21/05/1894-21/11/1894	April 1895
Dominica	21/05/1894-21/11/1894	April 1895

Falkland Islands	21/05/1894-21/11/1894	April 1895
Grenada	21/05/1894-21/11/1894	April 1895
Jamaica	21/05/1894-21/11/1894	April 1895
Montserrat	21/05/1894-21/11/1894	April 1895
Nevis	21/05/1894-21/11/1894	April 1895
Royal Mail Co.		April 1895
St Christopher	21/11/1894-21/05/1895	April 1895
St Lucia	21/11/1894-21/05/1895	April 1895
St Vincent	21/11/1894-21/05/1895	August 1895
Trinidad	21/11/1894-21/05/1895	August 1895
Turks Islands	21/11/1894-21/05/1895	August 1895
Virgin Islands	21/11/1894-21/05/1895	August 1895
Gambia	21/11/1894-21/05/1895	August 1895
Gold Coast	21/11/1894-21/05/1895	August 1895
Sierra Leone	21/11/1894-21/05/1895	August 1895
Mauritius	07/05/1892-21/11/1892	January 1896
Lagos	07/05/1892-21/11/1892	January 1896
St Helena	21/05/1895-21/11/1895	January 1896
Labuan	21/05/1895-21/11/1895	January 1896
British North Borneo	21/05/1895-21/11/1895	January 1896
Fiji Islands	21/05/1895-21/11/1895	January 1896
United States of America	21/11/1895-21/05/1896	June 1896
Victoria	21/11/1895-21/05/1895	October 1896
New Zealand	21/05/1897-21/11/1897	July 1897
South African Republic	21/05/1897-21/11/1897	July 1897
Transvaal (part)	21/05/1897-21/11/1897	July 1897
Transvaal (later issues)	21/05/1897-21/11/1897	October 1897
Cape of Good Hope	21/11/1895-21/05/1896	October 1897
Griqualand	21/11/1895-21/05/1896	October 1897
British Bechuanaland	21/11/1895-21/05/1896	October 1897
Spain (1850-1872)	21/05/1897-21/11/1897	January 1898
Spain (1873-1889)	21/05/1897-21/11/1897	September 1898
France (To October 1862)	21/05/1897-21/11/1897	September 1898
France (From October 1862)	21/05/1897-21/11/1897	February 1899
Austria (Down to 1867)	21/11/1897-13/09/1899	February 1899
Austria (From 1867)	21/11/1897-13/09/1899	September 1899
Switzerland (Down to Unpaid Letter Stamps)	21/05/1896-13/09/1899	September 1899
Italian States	21/05/1896-13/98/1899	November 1900

Material from the United States of America, completed between 21 November 1895 and 21 May 1896, went on public display for the first time in June 1896.[58] Likewise, selections from Spanish material for the period 1850 to 1873, completed between 21 May and 21 November 1897, went on exhibition for the first time in January 1898.[59]

Fig. 24. Page of United States of America 1847-1850 Issue Stamps first exhibited in the King's Library at the British Museum in June 1896. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, the Tapling Collection: United States of America, p. 14.

Fig. 25. Page of Spain 1850 Issue Stamps first exhibited in the King's Library at the British Museum in January 1898. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, the Tapling Collection: Spain, p. 1.

Exhibited in cases similar to those used for books and manuscripts, only a small amount of material could be shown at any one time, a state of affairs[60] satirized and commented upon in the *Philatelic Record & Stamp News*.[61] However exhibiting the entire collection was complex and fraught with difficulties. The collection needed adequate protection from loss or damage as well as unnecessary exposure to light. Likewise, the space required to exhibit it completely was estimated at 12,000 square feet.[62] Consequently, it took the Museum years to figure out a viable solution.

[58] *Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal* (30 June 1896).
[59] *Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal* (31 January 1898).
[60] Ellis, p. 410.
[61] Cartoon in *Philatelic Record & Stamp News* (June 1897), p.179.
[62] Nevile L. Stocken. 'The Tapling Collection', *Philately in Scotland*, i (Edinburgh, 1933), p. 254.

THE PHILATELIC PAVEMENT ARTIST.

GENTLEMAN: What do you call those?

PAVEMENT ARTIST: These 'ere picters represent the Tapling Collection of postage stamps, sir.

GENTLEMAN: Don't think much of the show.

PAVEMENT ARTIST (gruffly): It's a jolly sight more than you'll see of 'em inside, anyway. These 'ere are all taken from life, by the special permission of the Trustees and the British Museum, and the big wigs of the Philatelic Society, and this 'ere show will be continued regular till sich time as the Museum people can brick up a hextrey room to show the riginels, all proper like.

Fig. 26. Cartoon lampooning the Tapling Collection Exhibition at the British Museum prior to 1903. Source: *The Philatelic Record & Stamp News* (June 1897), p. 179.

Bacon submitted several proposals to the Museum's Board of Trustees during the 1890s, detailing potential solutions for exhibiting the collection in its entirety for the public. The one formally accepted in 1899 planned to employ a number of cabinets with shallow drawers, each one covered with plate glass, pulling out sufficiently far enough to allow an examination of the sheets of stamps they contained. They would be built on the same lines as those used at the Natural History Museum in South Kensington for the display of butterflies and moths, except the drawers would be shallower. Once work was completed, then situated in the King's Library, anybody entering that part of the Museum could then view the collection.[63]

The following year, this proposal was abandoned since the drawers were too shallow, making them liable to break away when pulled out with too much force. Instead, the adoption of vertical wooden frames containing slides was accepted. Each one contained four sheets of stamps (two on either side of the slide) with a piece of millboard inserted in the centre of each slide, on which the four sheets of stamps were fastened so as to obviate any tendency to slip. Covered with a sheet of glass in such a way as to leave a small space between the glass and the surface of the stamps, the slides formed rows within cabinets, each running in a separate groove, only pulling out sufficiently far to allow of the display of the stamps enclosed.[64]

[63] Edward Denny Bacon, 'The Tapling Collection', *The London Philatelist*, viii (November 1899), pp. 285-6.

[64] Edward Denny Bacon, 'The Tapling Collection', *The London Philatelist*, ix (November 1900), pp. 284-5. Also Edward Denny Bacon, 'The Tapling Collection', *The London Philatelist*, xii (February 1903), p. 26.

By 31 January 1902, the precise specifications for the cabinets had been determined and a manufacturer assigned. Charles J. Phillips reported in the *Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal* that he had:

> been up to see the progress made, and on May 20th the three large cabinets were in position, being located nearly in the centre of the King's Library. These cabinets are about six feet high and double fronted. Each one contains 396 slides working on brass runners. Each slide shows four sheets of stamps, and the slides are in two rows, one above the other. Underneath the slides of stamps there are pull-out slabs of polished wood, to be used as tables for taking notes. The stamps are now being arranged in alphabetical order, and about 1,200 sheets are in position. Probably by the beginning of June the contents of the first cabinet will be on view. The cabinets are superb pieces of workmanship – compact, convenient, well planned and arranged, and reflect the greatest credit upon the British Museum authorities, who have at length recognised the importance of the valuable bequest by the late Mr. T. K. Tapling to the nation. I am informed that the three cabinets will cost about £3,600.[65]

Finally opened for public exhibition during the Museum's opening hours between 10am and 6pm each day from 5 October 1903, these new cases were located right in the centre of the King's Library, continuously invigilated by a specially appointed custodian. The collection and the slides were arranged in alphabetical order, with the names of the countries placed above each row of slides. Catalogues and an index were also available on a table next to the collection, enabling users quickly to find particular stamp issues for any country.[66] Displayed in its entirety, the Tapling Collection's stamps filled 1104 of the slides.[67] Aside from a short period during the Second World War, Tapling's collections remained displayed in such a manner within the King's Library until their eventual transfer to the British Library's St Pancras site in 1997.[68]

Fig. 27. Twentieth-century photograph of the original display cases for the Tapling Collection in the King's Library at the British Museum. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, Photograph Collection.

[65] Charles J. Phillips, 'The Tapling Collection', *Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal* (30 May 1903), p. 251.

[66] 'Editorial: The Tapling Collection', *The London Philatelist*, xii (October 1903), pp. 229-30.

[67] Melville, *The Tapling Collection of Stamps and Postal Stationery at the British Museum*, pp. 22-53.

[68] Beech, *A Guide to Philatelic Research at the British Library*, p. 12.

Fig. 28. Used Type 1 Hawaii 1851-52 2 cents blue stamp known to have been stored in the British Museum's Cracherode Room in light of its rarity and value. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, the Tapling Collection: Hawaiian Islands.

Fig. 29. Wooden and Glass Hand-Held Tray used to consult high value material in the Cracherode Room, 19th Century. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, General Collections: Cracherode Tray.

Some of the rarest and most valuable items were stored in the Cracherode Room within a safe. Only accessible by special appointment, on such occasions they were taken out and placed within a secure portable hand-held tray for inspection.[69] The scale of the postal stationery collection rendered it impossible to exhibit completely within the cases. However, Bacon prepared a small selection for exhibition, displaying the postal stationery envelopes in slides 1105-1138.

[69] Melville, p. 21. The British Library's Philatelic Collections, General Collection: Cracherode Room Tray.

Table 8. Postal stationery envelopes exhibited from 1903 onwards[70]

Section	Slide	Section	Slide
Argentine Republic	1105	Hyderabad	1120
Austria	1105	India	1120
Austrian Italy	1106	Italy	1121
Azores	1106	Japan	1122
Baden	1107	Lubeck	1122
Barbados	1107	Madeira	1123
Bavaria	1108	Mauritius	1123
Belgium	1108	Mecklenburg-Schwerin	1124
Brazil	1109	Mecklenburg-Strelitz	1124
Bremen	1109	Mexico	1125
Brunswick	1109	New South Wales	1125
Canada	1110	Oldenburg	1126
Ceylon	1110	Paraguay	1126
Chili	1111	Persia	1126
Costa Rica	1111	Peru	1127
Danish West Indies	1111	Poland	1127
Denmark	1112	Portugal	1128
Ecuador	1112	Prussia	1128
Egypt	1113	Russia	1129-1130
Finland	1113	Salvador	1131
France	1114	Saxony	1131
Germany: Thurn & Taxis (North)	1114	Sweden	1132
Germany: North German Confed.	1115	Switzerland	1132
Germany: Thurn & Taxis (South)	1116	Tasmania	1133
German Empire	1116	Transvaal	1133
Great Britain	1116-1117	Travancore	1133
Guatemala	1118	Tunis	1133
Hamburg	1118	Turkey	1134
Hanover	1118	United States of America	1135-1136
Hawaiian Islands	1119	Victoria	1137
Heligoland	1119	Wurtemburg	1138
Hungary	1119	-	-

This followed a selection of postcards displayed within slides 1139-1118 of the exhibition cases.

[70] Melville, pp. 53-5.

Table 9. Postal stationery postcards exhibited from 1903 onwards[71]

Section	Slide	Section	Slide
Alsace-Lorraine	1139	Iceland	1165
Angola	1140	India	1166
Argentine Republic	1140	Japan	1166
Austria	1141	Jeypore	1166
Austrian Italy & Levant	1142	Jhind	1166
Azores	1143	Labuan	1166
Baden	1143	Lagos	1166
Bahamas	1143	Liberia	1166
Bangkok	1143	Luxemburg	1167
Barbados	1143	Macao & Timor	1167
Bavaria	1144	Madeira	1167
Belgium	1144	Malta	1167
Bermuda	1145	Martinique	1167
Bolivia	1145	Mauritius	1168
Bosnia & Herzegovina	1145	Mexico	1168
Brazil	1145-1146	Monaco	1168
British Bechuanaland	1146	Montenegro	1168
British Central Africa	1146	Montserrat	1169
British Guiana	1147	Mozambique	1169
British Honduras	1147	Nabha	1169
British North Borneo	1147	Natal	1169
Bulgaria	1147-1148	Nepal	1169
Canada	1148-1149	Newfoundland	1169
Cape of Good Hope	1149	New South Wales	1169
Cape Verde	1149	New Zealand	1170
Cashmere	1150	Nicaragua	1170
Ceylon	1150	Norway	1170
Chamba	1151	Orange Free State	1170
Chili	1151	Paraguay	1171
Columbia	1152	Persia	1171
Congo	1152	Peru	1171
Costa Rica	1152	Philippine Islands	1171
Cuba	1153	Porto Rico	1172
Curacao	1153	Queensland	1173
Cyprus	1154	Reunion	1173
Danish West Indies	1154	Roumania	1173
Denmark	1154	Russia	1174
Dominica	1155	St. Christopher	1174
Dominican Republic	1155	St. Lucia	1174
Dutch Indies	1156	St. Thomas	1174

[71] Ibid., pp. 54-5.

Ecuador	1156	St. Vincent	1174
Eastern Roumelia	1157	Salvador	1175
Egypt	1157	San Marino	1175
Falkland Islands	1157	Senegal	1175
Faridkot	1157	Servia	1175
Finland	1158	Shanghai	1175
France	1158	Siam	1175
French Colonies	1159	Sierra Leone	1176
Gambia	1159	South Australia	1176
Germany: North German Confed.	1159	Spain	1176-1177
German Empire	1160	Straits Settlements	1177
Gibraltar	1160	Surinam	1178
Gold Coast	1160	Sweden	1178-1179
Great Britain	1160-1161	Switzerland	1179-1180
Greece	1161	Tahiti	1180
Grenada	1161	Tasmania	1180
Guatemala	1162	Tobago	1181
Guinea	1162	Transvaal	1181
Gwalior	1162	Travancore	1181
Hawaii	1162	Trinidad	1181
Hayti	1162	Tunis	1182
Heligoland	1162	Turkey	1182-1183
Holland	1163	Turks Islands	1183
Honduras	1163	United States of America	1183-1184
Hong Kong	1163	Uruguay	1185
Italy	1164	Venezuela	1186
Jamaica	1164	Victoria	1187
Hyderabad	1165	Virgin Islands	1187
Hungary	1165	Western Australia	1187
Portuguese India	1172	Wurtemburg	1188
Portugal	1172	Zululand	1188
Puttialla	1173	-	-

Fig. 30. Russian 1848 Prepaid Envelopes mounted for display in the Display Cases. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, Tapling Collection Postal Stationery: Russia, p. 5.

Fig. 31. Labuan, Lagos and Liberia Prepaid Postcards, 1879-1882 mounted for display in the Display Cases. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, Tapling Collection Postal Stationery: Labuan, Lagos & Liberia, p. 1.

Some of the postal stationery selections placed in the cases include a page of Russian 1 December 1848 prepaid envelopes, in addition to a page containing postcards from Labuan, Lagos and Liberia issued between 1879 and 1882. Arranged in a similar fashion to the stamps, the sections of postal stationery material not on public display were arranged by typology, country, date of issue and then size. Housed in blue envelopes, with written details of the contents for each envelope, they were stored within airtight dark blue boxes.[72]

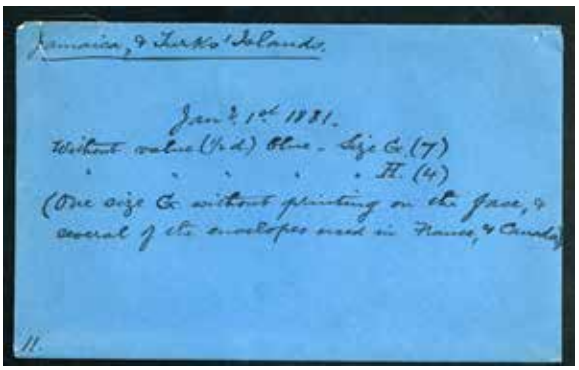

Jamaica, & Turks Islands.
Jan? 1st 1881.
Without value (½d) Blue - Size C. (7)
" " " " " H. (4)
(One size C without printing on the face, & several of its envelopes used in Jamaica & Turks

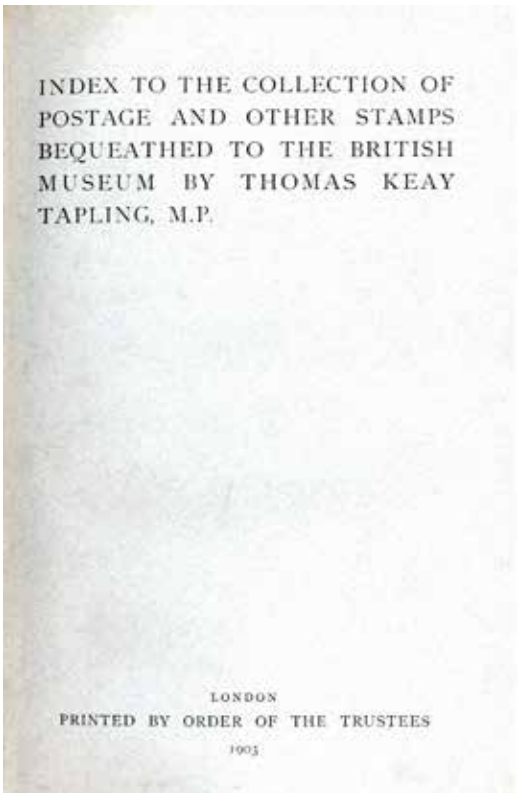
Fig. 32. Medium Sized Blue Envelope annotated by Edward Denny Bacon to store medium sized 1881 postal prepaid stationery envelopes for Jamaica and Turks Islands. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, General Collections: Tapling Postal Stationery Boxes & Envelopes.

Fig. 33. Box manufactured by Filmer & Son to store Tapling's Postal Stationery Collection. The label indicates this box stored envelopes and telegraph forms. Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections, General Collections: Tapling Postal Stationery Boxes & Envelopes.

[72] The British Library's Philatelic Collections, General Collection: Tapling Postal Stationery Boxes & Envelopes.

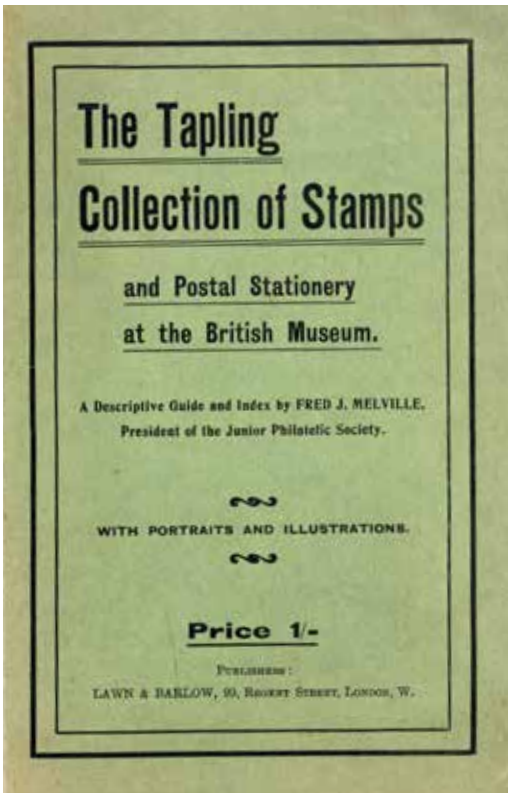
Early finding aids for the Tapling Collection

Published by order of the British Museum's Trustees in 1903, the *Index to the Collection of Postage and Other Stamps Bequeathed to the British Museum by Thomas Keay Tapling MP* is the first finding aid for the collection. Arranged alphabetically by country then slide number, larger sections within the collection are subdivided chronologically or by type with cross-references provided when necessary. This volume almost certainly codified the signage used upon the cases in the King's Library and is very basic, possessing no details relating to the provenance or history of the collection, no mention of philatelic rarities or items of interest nor any details of the postal stationery material.


INDEX TO THE COLLECTION OF POSTAGE AND OTHER STAMPS BEQUEATHED TO THE BRITISH MUSEUM BY THOMAS KEAY TAPLING, M.P.

LONDON
PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE TRUSTEES
1903

Fig. 34. Index to the Collection of Postage and Other Stamps Bequeathed to the British Museum by Thomas Keay Tapling MP (British Museum, 1903). Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections: Historic finding aids.


The Tapling Collection of Stamps and Postal Stationery at the British Museum.

A Descriptive Guide and Index by FRED J. MELVILLE, President of the Junior Philatelic Society.

WITH PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

Price 1/-

PUBLISHERS:
LAWN & BARLOW, 99, REGENT STREET, LONDON, W.

Fig. 35. Fred J. Melville, *The Tapling Collection of Stamps and Postal Stationery at the British Museum* (London, 1905). Source: The British Library's Philatelic Collections: Historic finding aids.

The philatelist Fred J. Melville published *The Tapling Collection of Stamps and Postal Stationery at the British Museum* two years later in 1905, which sold for a shilling. It starts with a brief historical survey of Tapling's collecting life, followed by a section on some of the collection's many items of interest including an inventory of rarities stored in the Cracherode Room. Arranged by postal authority, the listing includes notes detailing items of particular interest in each case next to the relevant slide number. It also listed the postal stationery on display for the first time and included black and white photographs of Thomas Keay Tapling, Edward Denny Bacon and numerous philatelic highlights. It was a guide par excellence, written by a collector for collectors and inspired the format of the British Museum's 1964 catalogue *The Tapling Collection of Postage Stamps and Telegraph Stamps and Postal Stationery* by the curator James Mackay.

Tapling's legacy

The formation, management and curation of the Tapling Collection in the British Museum Library during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had a profound impact on the department's development. In terms of collection acquisition, further philatelic donations to the British Museum followed in the immediate wake of Tapling's bequest right through to the present time. Notable examples include the philatelic library of the 26th Earl of Crawford, the Row Collection of Siam, the Campbell Johnson Collection, the Board of Inland Revenue Stamping Department Archive as well as the Crown Agents' Philatelic and Security Printing Archive. By 2021, the British Library's Philatelic Collections are responsible for the management and curation of over seventy collections, comprising eight and a half million items covering all aspects of philately, security printing and postal history worldwide. The management of these highly specialized collections has also ensured the continuous employment of qualified staff to acquire, manage and promote the collections since the days of Edward Denny Bacon and Jane Elizabeth Hamilton.[73]

Following the establishment of the British Library by an Act of Parliament in 1972, the British Museum's Library including its Philatelic Collections moved across to the British Library's St Pancras Site upon its completion in 1997.[74] The philatelic display cases now situated on the upper ground floor of the St Pancras building publicly exhibit selections from the Philatelic Collections during the Library's opening hours. Their method of public display remains true to the model developed by Bacon during the early twentieth century, and six of the cases are devoted entirely to the Tapling Collection. Around one hundred thousand items are on display in these cases at any time making them the library's largest exhibition space.

The British Library has also developed a dedicated reading room and reference library, open to anybody wishing to conduct research on the collections. Open between Mondays and Fridays from 10am to 4pm, it is accessible on a first-come-first-served appointment basis. Work on the Tapling Collection itself also continues within the department, which is actively creating the necessary digital images and metadata essential to enable the collection to become freely available for online research within the next couple of years, thereby carrying Tapling's philatelic legacy well into the twenty-first century.

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[73] Beech, *A Guide to Philatelic Research at the British Library,* pp. 11-13.

[74] Ibid., p. 12.

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